



15 December 2021

Candidacy Statement – Jonathan Bonnitcha

Dear colleagues,

I am a Senior Lecturer at the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia. My research interest is in international economic governance, with a particular focus on international investment law. Much of my research combines doctrinal exposition with empirical methods. My co-authored book *The Political Economy of the Investment Treaty Regime* is an example of this approach.

I have been an active member of Academic Forum from a few weeks after it was founded in 2018. I contributed to the Forum's work on duration of ISDS proceedings (completed in 2019) and then led the Forum's work on damages (completed in 2021). I am currently contributing to the Forum's work on mechanisms for dispute prevention, de-escalation and mitigation. I feel well prepared to take on a greater responsibility for the Forum's governance.

If elected I would have four main priorities.

The first is to support and nurture the existing strengths of the Academic Forum. The Academic Forum is a rare and valuable mechanism for providing expert input into an inter-state process of deliberation and law-making. Its success to date has been due to the Steering Committee's commitment to the principles of *neutrality* in approach and *diversity* in the views and backgrounds of membership.

The second is to build on the close working relationship that the Steering Committee has established with the UNCITRAL Secretariat. This relationship has been important in keeping the Forum's work relevant to the Working Group's agenda as it develops.

The third is to more actively elicit the research priorities of developing countries participating in the Working Group. Having worked for several years as an advisor within Myanmar's Investment Commission, I have some sense of the challenges that least developed countries confront in engaging with investment treaties. The Academic Forum has a role to play in producing research that supports the participation of developing countries in the Working Group, bearing in mind that different developing countries may have differing views and priorities.

My final priority is to encourage academics from non-legal backgrounds who to consider joining the Academic Forum. To be sure, the Academic Forum's membership policy already allows academics from other disciplines to become members and the Forum already has a handful of members who are not from a legal background. The Forum would be strengthened by greater participation of those with non-legal expertise that is relevant and specific to the Forum's core mandate.

Thank you for considering my candidacy,

Jonathan Bonnitcha